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Statement by
Senator Stuart Symington
Prepared for Delivery, Senate Floor

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THE MISUSE OF INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION

The American people are being enticed down the trail of insecurity by the issuance of misinformation about our deterrent power; and specifically about the missile gap.

The intelligence books have been juggled so the budget books may be balanced.

This is a serious accusation, which I make with all gravity.

I realize fully that my statements on this vital matter may be labeled as politically motivated by those who prefer to conceal the facts; and by others who do not know the facts.

I choose to face that risk. It is an insignificant risk indeed compared with the unwarranted risk which this policy of misinformation has brought down upon our country.

It is well known that this has been a matter of great concern to me for years, and that I have made every effort to get the facts and to analyze them objectively.

Occasionally, after the Administration's inaccuracies have been clearly and publicly labeled as such, top officials have modified their previous statements, such as occurred in the case of Secretary McElroy's admission last year about the 3 to 1 missile gap.

Mostly, however, the Administration has served up reassurances and complacency; and most recently, when the existence of a serious

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missile gap was being generally accepted, the Administration proceeded to change the ground rules for evaluating the facts.

A few events over the past 15 months are pertinent.

In late July 1958, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency briefed me on the Intelligence Community's estimate of Soviet missile capability. This analysis showed a substantial, and growing, missile gap. Based upon all the facts available to me, however, I considered that the Director had underrated the Soviet missile development.

Accordingly, on August 6, 1958, I visited with him again, and pointed out in some detail my reasons for believing that the Soviet long-range missile development was greater than he had estimated.

A few days later, on August 8, 1958, Mr. Dulles briefed the Senate. At that time he reported figures on Soviet missile development which were the same as those I had questioned on the two previous occasions.

On August 19, 1958, therefore, I requested an appointment with the President, in order to present to him my apprehension about the planned missile gap. At that time I undertook to explain why I believed the Soviet figures as presented by Mr. Dulles were underestimated, and left with the President a long letter giving the details.

Later the White House wrote suggesting that I present this analysis to Secretary McElroy; and also to Mr. Dulles.

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These follow-up conferences were held, but the estimates as presented by Mr. Dulles were not changed; in fact, a few weeks later, December 1958, just prior to the Administration's presentation of the fiscal year 1960 budget, the estimates of Soviet ICBM capability heretofore affirmed and reaffirmed by Mr. Dulles were further adjusted downward.

This downgrading of Soviet capability at that time concerned me for several reasons: first, because it appeared probable that our deterrent posture was being weakened by the misuse of intelligence data, and secondly, because the people were not being told the facts.

On January 12, 1959, the Vice President was reported as having told a press group that the U.S. was rapidly closing the missile gap. Immediately after this fantastic report, I told the Senate that any assertion the missile gap was being closed was inaccurate, and announced that if the Administration did not publish the truth, I would reveal the projected Soviet-U.S. missile situation in percentages.

In all fairness, it should be noted that thereafter Secretary McElroy did admit to the press that the ICBM gap could well become a 3 to 1 ratio in favor of the Soviets.

On the basis of the facts available to me, I believed that Secretary McElory's 3 to 1 ratio greatly understated the case. However, I also hoped that admission of such a planned weakness would immediately prompt a revision of our program and would cause a

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substitution of urgency for the existing complacency.

But no such anticipated change in our ICBM efforts resulted. Rather, the Administration took another approach -- i.e., that of further downgrading the Soviet missile posture.

On January 13, 1960, before the House Appropriations Committee, and again on January 19 before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the new Secretary of Defense informed the Congress and the people that they were using new ground rules for interpreting intelligence data regarding Soviet ICBMs.

The new policy is to compare Soviet intent in the ICBM field as against our ICBM schedules. Prior to this, the comparison had been based upon Soviet capability in the ICBM field as against our ICBM schedules.

This amazing change in the method of using intelligence data enabled the Administration to further cut down substantially the estimate of Soviet ICBM production.

At this point is is meaningful to compare the statement of Secretary Gates this year with the statement of Secretary McElroy 12 months ago.

On January 21, 1959, and again on January 29, 1959, Secretary McElroy testified to the Senate as follows:

> "I think it would be very dangerous if we did not proceed on this basis . . . . I think that it should be understood that from the standpoint of the Department of Defense, we are assuming, as I think we should assume, that they - meaning the opponent - will have these numbers in being at the times when the national intelligence estimate says that they could have it."

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On January 13, 1960, and again on January 19, 1960, Secretary Gates revealed a radical change in policy from that announced by his predecessor. The following quotation is from Secretary Gates' testimony before the House Committee on January 13:

> "Heretofore, we have been giving you intelligence figures that dealt with the theoretical Soviet capability. This is the first time that we have had an intelligence estimate that says, 'This is what the Soviet Union probably will do.' Therefore, the great divergence, based on figures that have been testified to in years past, narrows because we talked before about a different set of comparisons - ones that were based on Soviet capabilities. This present one is an intelligence estimate on what we believe he probably will do, not what he is capable of doing."

The basic concept has been changed. The fundamental basis of prior evaluation was capability. Now suddenly it has become intent.

Through this process, the Administration has given the people the impression that the missile deterrent gap has been sharply reduced and possibly eliminated. In fact, able and responsible reporters have been given such impression, as is evidenced by the many news columns that have been written in an optimistic vein about what has suddenly been discovered about our relative ICBM program.

In other words, without accelerating our ICBM program, the impression has been given that the admitted 3 to 1 gap no longer exists.

On the January 24, 1960, "Face the Nation" telecast, Secretary of the Air Force Sharp was asked, "Is there going to be any period

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during 1960, or '61, or '62, or '63 when Russia will have more missiles than we have, which are ready to go, and that a missile gap will, in fact, exist?" Secretary Sharp replied, "I think it is doubtful, but they might."

A year ago Secretary of Defense McElroy announced a 3 to 1 missile gap. Under the new theory, the Secretary of the Air Force thinks there may be no gap at all.

From a budgetary point of view, of course, this shift in policy is less expensive than would be a decision to accelerate our own ICBM program.

Without going into the classified specifics, I believe it is important for the American people to know that this manipulation of data as to quantity was also accompanied by an effort to downgrade the Soviet missiles as to quality -- the recent impressive Soviet missile test in the Pacific notwithstanding.

In his State of the Union message of January 7, 1960, the President said: "Our military missile programs . . . do not suffer from any present lack of very large rocket engines. . . . The thrust of our present missiles is fully adequate for defense requirements."

Secretary of Defense Gates used almost the same words as the President in diminishing the significance of the large rockets used in the Soviet ICBMs.

Again, without revealing the specifics of classified testimony, it is important to bring out that the destructive payload attributed

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to Soviet ICBMs, as well as the range of such weapons, is far greater than in our missiles.

Surely the greater payload and the greater range of these Soviet weapons stems directly from the use of greater thrust rocket engines.

The facts are that a very substantial missile gap does exist, and the Administration apparently is going to permit this gap to increase.

I made this statement in the past based upon the intelligence information then being used, and I make this statement again today, as it is still true -- even when one uses the smaller Soviet figures derived from an analysis of their intent instead of their capability.

The truth is that if we compare the ready to launch missiles attributed to the Soviets on the new intelligence basis with the official readiness programs for U. S. ICBMs, the ratio for a considerable length of time will be more than 3 to 1.

If one assumes, as I am sure we do assume, that the United States would not be the first to attack, then it is particularly appropriate to compare, on our side, only those ICBMs which there is a chance of our launching after we have received warning of an attack.

There will be those who will contend that this is just a comparison of our ICBM strength against their ICBM strength -- and that is exactly what it is intended to be.

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This does not include our IRBMs vis-a-vis their missiles of that category -- although if it did, the Soviet advantage would be even greater.

Likewise, this comparison does not include the cruiser and submarine launched missiles which both Russia and the United States are expected to have. If it did include such types of missiles, however, it is not revealing classified data to state that more missiles would be added to the Soviet side of the comparison than to the U. S. side.

Therefore, I charge this Administration with using intelligence information in such a manner that the American people have been given an inaccurate picture of what is necessary for our national defense.

I regret that it is necessary for me to make this serious charge.

But, because of the critical importance of this whole question to the security of the United States and the free world, I am certain that the American people have the right to know the truth.

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